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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY The Vatican
SUBJECT The Pontifical Commission for Russia

PLACE ACQUIRED Rome
(BY SOURCE)

DATE ACQUIRED Aug 54
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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE: US citizen, Catholic priest, engaged in population research. He has extensive experience in combating Communist infiltration into labor unions in the US. He is extremely anti-Communist but tends toward judging all anti-Communist activity as reliable.

During August 1954, he was in Europe, and when in Rome, attending the World Population Conference. He had frequent contact with Vatican officials of medium rank.

1. I do not believe that the former program for the placing of Catholic priests behind the Iron Curtain is now being implemented because of the assurances of the past infiltration into the office of Cardinal Eugene Tisserant, who was formerly in charge of the project.
2. Unfortunately, Cardinal Tisserant used to hold the belief that all Russian emigres would work for the break-up of the Soviet state. He befriended all those Russians in the Eastern Rite of the Church at the expense of losing the support of Ukrainians and the like. In treating all Russians as anti-Communists, he was under the influence of the Great Russian point of view and an extremely liberal social philosophy. His power, now at age 70, is failing rapidly in all Vatican circles. The Pontifical Commission for Russia has been removed from his influence. Tisserant is still active in promoting a liberal approach to social problems and is usually supported by Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro, Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, and Giovanni Battista Montini, Archbishop of Milan. If a new Pope were ever elected from the politically left side of Vatican politics, it would be Lercaro or Siri.
3. The Pontifical Commission for Russia is now headed by Bishop Antonio Samoré, formerly the Archbishop of Columbia, who has a good first-hand knowledge of Communism. One of the ablest members of the commission is Father Asacio Gerasim, a Ukrainian. Other members are Bishops Carlo Grano and Angelo Dell'Acqua.

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